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NEW TOWNS & CITIES FOR PENNSYLVANIA



A Policy Statement
proposed to GOVERNOR RAYMOND P. SHAFER

by

GOVERNOR'S SCIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Panel on New Towns and Cities

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INTRODUCTION

Background

The renewal of our cities and towns and of our air and streams and countryside demands the first attention of Pennsylvanians.

The considerations presented in this statement are not intended as either a substitute for or a diversion from this urgent task.

The purpose of this statement is to alert Pennsylvanians to a new option, planned orderly growth around present communities and the development of new towns and cities.

This alternative has been evidenced not only by experience in other nations; a number of states in this country already are attempting to guide their growth and development in this fashion. Growing public concern for conservation has encouraged this effort.

Key ingredients appear to be the financial resources and technical skills available in large measure in private enterprise nurtured and closely coordinated with aware and prudent governmental policies and programs.

These developments represent highly attractive centers of economic growth. Intelligently guided growth conserves natural beauty both in the countryside and within established and expanding urban regions. Potentially, these centers of human and economic investment can be designed to be attractive and satisfying to their inhabitants and adequate both in jobs and supporting tax base.

The challenge to this generation of Pennsylvanians is to develop the legislation and governmental policies and the industrial enterprise which can promote and guide the growth of towns and cities in the Commonwealth in a manner profitable to private investment and the public interest alike.

To create the climate for this endeavor demands study and consideration and wisdom now.

The purpose of this statement is to draw attention to some of the opportunities before us and problems which must be overcome if we are to seize the advantages to be gained in this new "action" area.

New Towns and Cities Report

It is the purpose of the Governor's Science Advisory Committee to alert Pennsylvanians to new considerations in technological or economic advancement. In this tradition, this policy statement is based on the work over the past year of a special Panel of the Governor's Science Advisory Committee. The members of this Panel on New Towns and Cities are listed at the end of this statement.

The Panel met several times in Harrisburg and heard presentations from various representatives connected with new cities ventures. Visits were arranged to the new communities at Columbia, Maryland; Reston, Virginia; Coral Springs, Florida; and Tofrees, Pennsylvania. Individual members of the Panel made extensive studies of the literature dealing with new cities and were aided by papers prepared especially for the Panel.

The members of the Panel presented and discussed their ideas and views on a number of occasions; they are reflected in this statement and in the technical supplement which is in final preparation.

This policy statement is intended for use by the Governor and the many interested Pennsylvanians. It is intended to alert the State's leadership and its people to the significant development opportunities on the horizon and the considerations involved.

It is not the Panel's objective to be exhaustive or to offer decisions which are more properly determined by the Governor and the Legislature.

It is the Panel's purpose to submit recommendations which merit attention in achieving the reality which this statement suggests may be within our grasp.

A more detailed report with some of the technical questions related to new cities covered in greater depth will be presented to the Governor by the Panel at a later date.

Acknowledgments

The work of the Panel has been advanced by the personal interest shown by Governor Shafer. In addition to his comments and counsel, he accompanied its members on visits to two new city developments in the United States.

Senator Ernest P. Kline and House Minority Whip Lee A. Donaldson, Jr. also visited Reston, Virginia, with the Governor and members of the Panel.

These deliberations were greatly aided, as well, by Lt. Governor Raymond Broderick and other members of Governor Shafer's administration who served as members of the Panel, participated in its deliberations and joined in several of the new cities visits.

Of equal note, the Panel is indebted to the Rouse Company of Columbia, Maryland, to the Gulf Oil Corporation (hosts at Reston), and to the Westinghouse Electric Corporation for the visit to Coral Springs, Florida. In each instance, the greatest cooperation and assistance was extended to acquaint the Panel with the specific circumstances and issues dealt with in the development of these new communities.

SUMMARY OF POLICY STATEMENT

Conclusions

The Governor's Science Advisory Committee and its Panel on New Towns and Cities suggest that the development of new towns and cities in Pennsylvania can achieve the following major objectives:

- conserve the natural beauty, historic values and the benefits of two and one-half centuries of care of the Pennsylvania landscape;
- establish higher standards of living for Pennsylvanians;
- provide for strengthened economic growth;
- protect agricultural land from urban sprawl and omnivorous consumption;
- retain open space and recreation areas as an appropriate element in man's environment;
- provide a wider choice of employment opportunities and residential locations in Pennsylvania;
- build communities free of air, water and land pollution;
- improve the efficiency and lower the cost of housing construction by better organization and the economies of scale possible in the building of new communities.

These objectives are supplementary to those programs dealing with the necessary renewal and rehabilitation of the existing cities and towns in the Commonwealth. Together with the recommendations in this policy statement, they may express a total urban strategy for the Commonwealth.

Recommendations

Action now on the following considerations is urged:

- use of the coordinated application of Federal and State programs and public investments to encourage new town or city developments;

- integrate Statewide development and transportation planning with locating and planning new towns and cities;
- encourage the investment of private capital in new town or city construction by providing suitable incentives;
- State benefits and assistance should be available to new community development on the basis of State Planning Board approval of the master plan;
- legislation to encourage and facilitate the construction of new towns and cities should receive early consideration.

WHY NEW TOWNS AND CITIES FOR PENNSYLVANIA

Choices and the Future

Massive urban growth is a fact of life in America. Careful planning of that growth is not. The quality, pattern and costs of our urban development must be of high priority concern to all who want this country to make the greatest use of its bountiful human, economic and physical resources.

There are some crucial questions one might ask about the nature of the future urban areas of the United States: Are the visible results of the urban building process in our metropolitan areas satisfactory enough to serve as a pattern for the future, considering that within thirty years we expect to double the urban land in America? Has the building and urban development process provided the opportunity for a sufficiently rewarding life for most people? Are sufficient choices for places to live as well as for the location of economic activity available today?

The nation, its states, and our local areas need a courageous new approach to dealing with man's environment, its form and substance. Careful planning can make change constructive and useful.

By the year 2,000, the United States expects to have 300 million people. We currently number somewhat more than 200 million; by 1975 there may be 20 million more. By 1975, three-fourths of all the people in this nation are expected to be living in metropolitan areas. Where? Under what circumstances? How?

The current scale of urban expansion not only underscores the need for a fresh stage of new community building in America today, it also indicates the unique character of present opportunities. The scale of the nation's expanding population, economy and housing market has never been so great. It is this scale which provides a market not available before for creating new communities. Its magnitude requires the combined effort of the private sector and all levels of government as well.

New communities described

The possibilities for new development of high quality should be explored in existing metropolitan areas, outside of metropolitan areas and around smaller communities.

What is being sought is a development pattern whose profile includes a sound economic base; a broad range of employment opportunities, a variety of housing types, prices and rents; a comfortable internal transportation system as well as convenient access to other communities and metropolitan areas; adequate community facilities, services and amenities; and an effective local government.

In Pennsylvania, a state rich in history and the use of its resources, conservation becomes an especially meaningful consideration with respect to new cities and towns. They can represent a positive approach to conservation and minimize the displacement of productive agricultural land or rural land valued for historic, scenic or recreational purposes.

In Pennsylvania, a state long in the forefront of innovation in transportation and on the threshold of continuing this leadership through a proposed Department of Transportation, facilities are and can be provided that are integral to the planning and programming of new communities.

Obstacles

The complexities most frequently encountered with respect to new community development include the multiplicity of local governmental jurisdictions and ensuing disagreements, the acquisition of the necessary large areas of land and funding for capital investments with a slow return.

The constraints imposed by the fact of a large number of units of local government being involved in a location or area under consideration may be eased by the extensive involvement of local authorities in the planning process. The services of the regional planning agency in the area as well as the assistance of state planning capabilities would seem to be most warranted in these instances.

The assembly of the necessary large acreages, usually between 5,000 to 15,000 acres, under one ownership, is most often difficult in the desirable locations. However, Pennsylvania has many large, favorably located holdings along or accessible to major transportation routes which merit evaluation. In addition, areas formerly used for strip coal mining and subject to reclamation command attention and careful examination for this purpose.

The disparities between the magnitude of investment and the schedule of return suggest the need to carefully coordinate and program public investments--Federal, state and local--with private

development activities. The advisability of establishing publicly authorized corporate structures that might work with private investors in new city developments also warrants consideration.

ROLE OF THE STATE

Planning

Statewide comprehensive planning should be the basis for a total urban strategy including new town and new city development. Local and regional planning organizations have an important role in geographic, economic and ecological analyses and judgments concerning potential new communities, particularly in light of their local detailed knowledgeability.

State planning becomes indispensable in providing an inter-regional and statewide overview including integrating planned new cities and towns into State plans and policy.

Encouragement

The Governor's Office, through his designated representative, should exercise the necessary level of authority to coordinate the programs of all the agencies of the State government in encouraging new city developments. The utilization of Federal funding should be a significant resource in this respect. Operating budgets and capital programs should give high priority to those projects that have new community application.

We would like Pennsylvania to be the first state to announce a positive program to encourage the construction of complete new towns or cities. The value and importance of such projects only now is beginning to be appreciated throughout the rest of the nation.

Some specific means which could encourage such efforts include highway construction and provision of interchanges, financial assistance for planning, application for Federal funding where appropriate, assistance in land acquisition and granting of bonding authority or other provision for the necessary large capital funding.

Safeguards

During planning and construction, the State should represent the interests of the future citizens of the new community and also the interests of the citizens of adjacent communities. In

particular, care should be taken not to inequitably increase taxes of adjacent communities to provide benefits for the new development or to support costs occasioned by it. The total impact of such development on nearby communities should be carefully considered.

Availability of State assistance with respect to each new town or city should be contingent on approval of its master plan by the State Planning Board.

Legislation

Pennsylvania can contribute to new community development by reviewing the requirements for their governing, formulating non-restrictive enabling legislation and delegating to local government the authority required to gain their effective participation in the planning, development and governing of new communities. The State should provide legislation for counties and multiple jurisdictions that wish to sponsor public, private or joint public-private new community development. Legislation implementing the recent local government constitutional amendment should be sensitive to these issues.

State enabling legislation also should establish a framework for the private sector to undertake and relate to new community development.

Organizational arrangements for planning, development, construction and marketing of new towns and cities should gain clear definition. Terms on which State benefits can be made available to development corporations should include approval of plans, State right to condemn construction contrary to approved plans, and evidence of an adequate capital funding program.

Extensive experience has indicated the crucial imperative of facilitating land acquisition. Existing eminent domain legislation should be carefully reviewed as to its adequacy for the purposes of new city development.

PLAN OF ACTION

Recommendations

1. The Governor encourage the planning and construction of new towns and cities in Pennsylvania. These should reflect the following qualities:

- completeness; the number of jobs should be substantially equal to the number of working population;

- access; there should be good transportation to the nearest metropolitan area;
- comfortable, uncongested, internal transportation;
- abundant open space in and around town;
- inhibition of unplanned, adjoining development;
- adequate water supply;
- adequate waste disposal to maintain high environmental quality;
- adequate maintenance;
- architectural beauty.

In achieving these qualities, new community development should reflect these principles as well:

- significant contribution to the reduction of housing, education and employment pressures of the area in which the new town is located, with particular attention to the needs of central cities;
- furthering the achievement of socially and economically balanced communities, with special account being taken of the needs of low and moderate-income families;
- accord with the planning objectives of the Commonwealth and the local governments of the region in which the development is located;
- full opportunity for the private sector to be engaged in both financing and construction consistent with the planning objectives established by the governments involved.

2. The Governor's Office should determine the legislation that is needed to facilitate or encourage construction of complete, planned new towns or cities and formulate and expedite consideration of such legislation by the General Assembly.

3. The State should make available a "package" of benefits--the coordinated application of Federal and State programs and public investments--to encourage new town or city developments which meet state planning criteria for approval.

4. The State Planning Board should approve master plans for new towns or cities as a condition for availability of special State benefits or assistance.

5. The State Planning Board should assure that Federal support and funding is utilized to the extent consistent with State objectives and approved plans.

6. Statewide development and transportation planning should be integrated with planning of locations for new towns and cities.

7. The State should encourage the investment of private capital in new town or city construction by providing suitable incentives such as interest guarantees and tax-free dividend status.

8. The State should encourage the construction of new towns or cities only at locations approved by the State Planning Board.

9. The State Planning Board should undertake a systematic survey to identify and evaluate possible new town locations.

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